



SUCCESS STORY

PHILADELPHIA DISTRICT OFFICE

U. S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

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FROM BICYCLES TO TRUCKS

In fewer than 14 years she grew her business from a local bike messenger service to a regional transportation provider moving freight up and down the Northeast Corridor.

From day one she faced the hurdles inherent in being a woman in a male-dominated industry.

She's Claudia Post, President and CEO of Diamond Transportation Group, Inc., and she defines her success with two words: vision and determination.

With vision she anticipates the needs of the marketplace and reconfigures her business model to respond, with excellent customer service always the top priority.

With determination she has overcome tremendous challenges. The discovery that each bike messenger delivery generated a loss in revenue forced her to shut down that branch and focus on car, van and truck deliveries. She wanted to buy out her business partner. "That's where the SBA stepped in with financial help. And more," recalls Post.

Post was introduced to the SBA in 1992 through her relationship with her bank. The SBA worked with her to secure a \$200,000 guaranteed loan, and, according to Post, the SBA's mission of providing financial assistance in addition to guidance in *every aspect* of business armed her with information to make intelligent choices at every level. In '92 her staff was comprised of 30 people. Today there are close to 150 people, 6 million dollars in sales and Post's endless appreciation for "the good people of SBA. I could not have done it without them."

States Post, "As an unsophisticated consumer of financial information I was somewhat naïve about the intricacies of money and banking relationships. I knew the transportation business inside out. But the concept of borrowing to meet a specific plan for growth was outside my experience. I needed a mentor and a map. When I discovered the SBA, I found an incredible resource for achieving my American dream. As my business has continued to change and develop I've called on the SBA and its wonderful staff to work with me. Whether it's one-on-one or with their training material, even with the marketing text on their website, SBA has been a loyal and trustworthy partner to my business. And the SBA's enduring commitment to women and minorities validates my own"

Diamond has recently moved to the enterprise zone at 2nd and Erie Avenue in the Hunting Park section of Philadelphia. With a longstanding history of contributing to the community, Post, who could have moved Diamond out of the city, chose to contribute to its growth by upgrading an abandoned building that had been empty for 12 years. Today the 100,000 sq. ft. cross-dock facility is alive 24/7/365 – it never closes. And, to accurately promote the full range of her company's services, Post changed its name from Diamond Courier to Diamond Transportation Group, Inc.

Post's achievements have been recognized by the transportation industry, the Philadelphia region's civic and business communities and with state and federal awards. She has been honored as one of the "50 Best Woman in Business" by the State of Pennsylvania, and is ranked number one in the *Philadelphia Business Journal* 2004 Book of Lists as the largest woman-owned business in the region's tri-state area. She takes none of this lightly, crediting her team of dedicated employees. "I never stop telling them what they mean to Diamond and to me."

"Business is not static," Claudia Post muses. "It's a rough ride of challenges, obstacles and the everyday bumps of a roller-coaster economy. Success takes determination – and the help of the good people at the SBA. We're fortunate to have them"